

LEARNING "TO TREAT 'EM ROUGH"

THE TANK CORPS LINES UP ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF GETTYSBURG

Tank Corps Instructors Hand Pick Their Men for Physical Powers and Fatigue Capacity From All Ranks

THE news of the "tank" victories of the last six weeks and the official assurance that the tank, once somewhat discredited, is suddenly raised to a high place in the order of Hun killers was nowhere received with more joy than among the few thousand "treat 'em rough" boys in the American tank camps. Visions of themselves clattering ahead of the doughboys and scattering Hun regiments over the landscape became very real. Those already in training see themselves as the vanguard of thousands of American tanks leading a triumphant, if bloody, procession to Berlin.

"Give us tanks enough, only give us tanks enough, and then—oh boy!" said one of the officers.

And they all feel that way. For the tank corps is the native home of enthusiasm. No man is in it who could be scared out by stories of privation, mutilation or sudden death. All are volunteers, and many, very many, are men who have given up big jobs, and even commissions in other branches, to get inside the clattering monsters. Many men now in the tank corps have actually refused commissions in the corps itself, for the tank officer seldom rides in the tank, and many of those who enlist are men whose supreme ambition is to see a German machine-gun nest through the sights of their own Brownings.

Few Endure The Physical Test

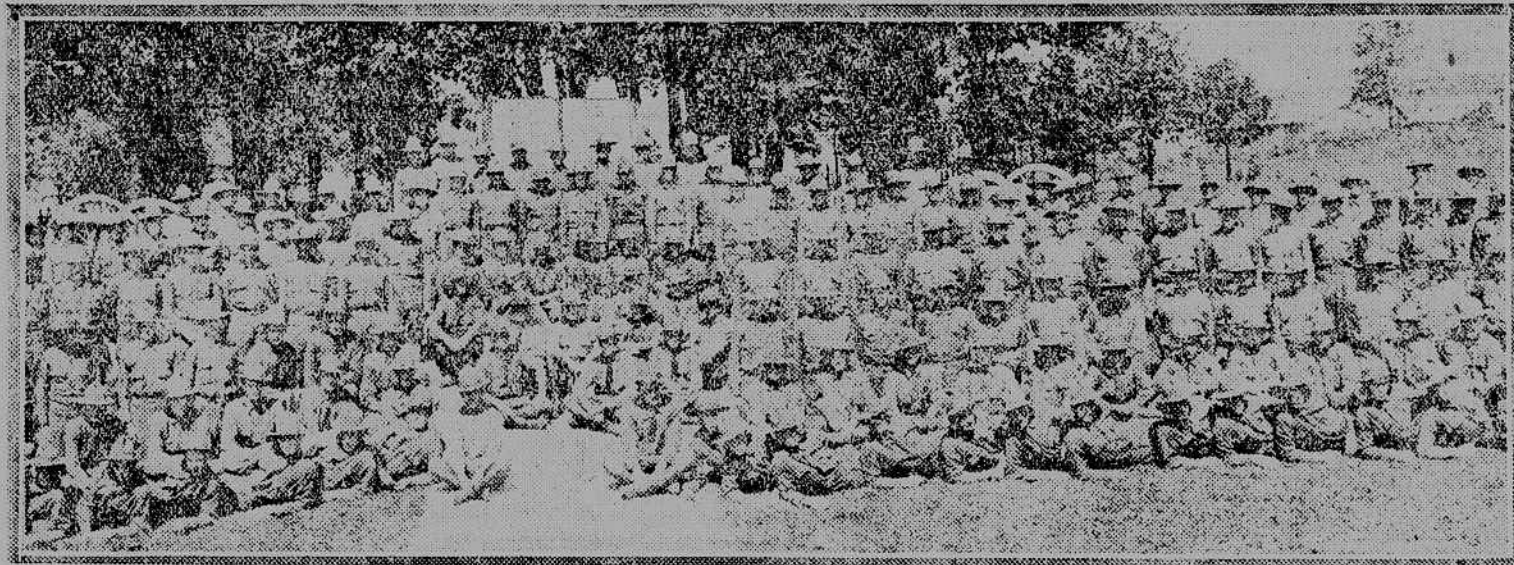
At the present rating all men who enlist in the tank corps must be between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one, registered in the draft, and in some class other than 1—that is, in a deferred class. It is absolutely essential that they be physically fit. Men are constantly being weeded from "Black Tom" service and sent to the ordnance or some other department which requires less strenuous physical endurance. There is a tremendous strain on a man's nerves, his fatigue capacity and his energies in one of these thundering tanks, whose machinery alone—without taking into account the rapid fire of its guns under attack—produces a heat like a boiler room and an uproar so great that order cannot be transmitted verbally, but must be conveyed from one man to another through a most carefully worked out system of signs and signals.

Although men with mechanical training are wanted this is not essential to acceptance in the corps. It is necessary that a man be, first of all, a soldier, or the stuff of which soldiers are made—a man prepared to meet the roughest sort of conditions without so much as the flicker of an eye. This is no branch for the squeamish individual with nerves. The noise, the fumes, the terrible vibration and the intense nervous strain of tank fighting are now well known facts. The jolts and jars of subway travel are as nothing compared to the irregularities of travel in one of these iron caterpillars, as it tips across trenches, craters and shell holes and tears its way through wire entanglements, uprooting trees and throwing down the walls of houses. And yet, as one man writes, "in spite of their elemental strength and apparent clumsiness they are, in the hands of skilled drivers, as agile as trained elephants under their own mahouts." Grotesquely abnormal and ungainly in appearance, they appeal to the humorous in an infantryman, and he charges in the wake of his lumbering guide with a

chuckle at its effect upon the enemy. "And every German bullet that clings against its steel sides is one less aimed at our men. Each silvery star splashed on its side is the signature of one that has not drilled its way through the body of an infantry soldier."

The two large American tank camps are in Pennsylvania—a preliminary camp at Gettysburg and a finishing camp at Tobyhanna—and here the men are taught something of almost every branch of service except flying, for the tanks are shock troops, cavalry and artillery combined. The enlisted men are put through infantry drill, light artillery practice, master the manual of arms, learn to handle a rifle, machine and rapid fire guns and the revolver—the latter, by the way, being the only personal defensive arms carried by a tank man in actual combat. All the intricacies, stubbornness and eccentricities of an engine are studied and absorbed, and the name of every part—even the most minute and seemingly unimportant—must be learned, and learned so well that a man awakened from his sleep and confronted with a small joint or valve could instantly call it by name. A man must know how to take a tank apart, guns, engines and all, and put it together again in the dark.

There are long hikes and drills, exercises that stretch muscles a man



Above—A formation not in the military manuals. Below—A group of tank fighters before the monument that stands on the place where Lee's invasion reached its highest point.

And if this is the bally Tank Corps, Why, I'm a son of a gun.

When we're settled on the bunk, After mess is put away, Then sit "Get those full packs ready, We'll hike the rest of the day."

And we sweat and swear in the broiling, blistering sun. And if this is the whooping Tank Corps, Well, I'm a son of a gun!

Another man, caught after the first week of training and asked what he thought of it, grinned and "lowed as how it was great, though most of his time had been spent in unloading wood

His enthusiasm was contagious, and several of the men at camp who have actually been in service in the fighting line had graphic stories to tell of the work done by these uncannily human machines, which worm through any obstacle and create such havoc among the German army. In one instance the men of a tank found themselves cut off from the artillery and their machine disabled. Temporary repairs, however, sent it gasping toward the foe, nose down and oblivious to the shells raining about it. The men inside stuck to their guns and spit lead bullets at the opposing Germans, who soon broke into confusion and took to flight. Fifty of them, however, were captured by the tank, unaided and handicapped by engine trouble. The corps, hot, begrimed and almost exhausted by the strain of several hours' intense fighting, rounded their fifty prisoners together, started them ahead of the tank and proceeded to the rear, the tank behaving more or less like a lame duck, but clatteringly triumphant.

At another time a tank and its crew found themselves in a stormy position inside the enemy lines, with no way of escape. Shut up in their movable fortress the men kept the tank advancing, backing up and turning about for all the world like a cat with its back up, all the while shooting fire at the Germans who surrounded it and were trying to pierce the armor and get at the men inside. This kept up for five hours, until the infantry arrived and rescued the outfit. Stories such as these are innumerable, and the man who has known the inimitable zest of waiting for the signal to advance, knowing it was up to him to get the huge bulk of his machine over the enemy entanglements and clear the ground for the advancing infantry—knowing that the success of an attack depends largely upon him and his thoroughness with which he and his machine wipe away obstructions—such a man has a gleam in his eye that bodes no good for the Boche.

Find the Goat Second Best

"Black Tom," the ferocious mascot of the tank boys, the dare-devil, bristling feline that spits from the tank turret and forebodes ill for any Fritz who gets within the range of his eye, roams about the camps in a multiplicity of persons. Any cat that looks fierce enough and black enough is apt to get kidnapped and adopted by some battalion. If there aren't cats enough to go round, well—one battalion has a black goat and was be unto the hapless individual who is moved to criticize or question the substitution. It just isn't done, that's all.

"We couldn't find a cat that suited us," the sergeant explained, "so we

took the goat, because—well, because he's just as tough."

He is, and the tank that takes him along has an adequate battery attachment. Company C of the 304th Battalion boasts of having the biggest black toment in history, and it is getting a course of training that, added to its inherited and instinctive combativeness, will guarantee a rough time for the Germans who happen to meet his particular armored rendezvous.

Little Round Top, made famous by the battle of Gettysburg, is now a place of trust and the abode of romance. A restaurant and dancing pavilion lend their touch of modernity, and many a man, lingering over a difficult farewell, has been forced to make a mad dash back to camp in time for taps or suffer disgrace equivalent to that of A. W. O. L. (absent without leave).

Hand-Picked Ones Can Entertain

Aside from the usual entertainments provided for the men in camp, Gettysburg has a natural open air theatre back of Company C, 304th Battalion, where something happens every Tuesday night. Usually it's a wrestling or boxing match—and no amateur stunt at that. The seats are always crowded, not only by the men of the corps, but by visiting civilians. There is a tank orchestra and a fund of home talent that rounds up into a vaudeville entertainment that some of the Broadway hangers-on would gladly pay a war tax to see.

Another mascot of the human variety is the ten-year-old son of Mrs. McClary, whose stories of the Black Toms are familiar. Master McClary, the youngest member of the Gettysburg camp, has been commissioned a first lieutenant, and, armed with a pass, imperiously demands admittance to any part of the camp that houses "his pals." Private "Pop" Harris, whose son is an infantryman in France and who is himself a member of the 304th Battalion of the Black Toms, is the oldest Gettysburg member, and refuses to accept a commission, preferring to act as general "Dad" to the boys, keeping their money for them, sympathetically listening to their woes or joys and proffering advice when advice is sought.

There is diversion and plenty of it in camp, but the good work must be continued when the boys get "over there," and for this purpose, and to insure a well organized plan for caring for our "Black Toms," a civilian tank corps league is being formed, with officers chosen from among prominent men and women of the country, many of whom have sons in the "treat 'em rough" ranks. The American tankers represent a most extraordinary organization from the personnel standpoint, and are proud of that fact. Every man is hand picked and accepted in the tank

corps because of his fitness, not only physical but from the standpoint of general worth. The men are a splendidly developed lot, daring, energetic and initiative. They are prepared to meet the most dangerous conditions incumbent upon a soldier, and they know this before they enlist. In this branch of the service a man gets killed all over or he comes through O. K. There are no half-way measures, no wounds or maiming. He either escapes unharmed or he dies with his guns.

There are many divisions to tank service, and some are more hazardous than others. The salvage corps has,

Scope for Individual Adventure in Armored Cavalry Appeals to Finest Types of Fighting Americans

ploding shell and flying shrapnel. There is an elaborate system of signalling developed in connection with tank service, and the signal men, who rush up from the rear with new parts for those damaged under fire, take their lives in their hands each time they are sent for. At all times there is a replacement corps, from which men are constantly being sent into action to replace some one who has been killed, a system of individual substitution unique in this branch of service.

Such men must necessarily be a picked lot of the highest calibre, and the Tank Corps League is organized for the special purpose of furthering in every possible way the welfare of the men in tank corps. A system of entertainment is planned to meet post-action reaction, when the men are forced to spend a brief period of inactivity between battles. Tobacco, candy, musical instruments and means of amusement will be furnished, and everything will be done to assist in furthering the individual shipment of articles to the men of the corps and to assure their proper delivery.

The league aims to render practical assistance to the families of all tank men overseas, and in the event of a casualty to obviate to as great an extent as possible any distress arising

from a woman who has one of these little buttons will probably want to put a halo around it. If any one happens to want to become an honorary member he or she can do so for \$25, and Lieutenant Gardner, at tank headquarters, Room 1003, 19 to 25 West Forty-fourth Street, is there for the express purpose of sending a membership application any time a person signifies he wants to become a member of the Tank Corps League, whether he's a civilian or one of the enlisted.

Incidentally, Sergeant Jimmie Shea, who stepped out of vaudeville into the tank corps at Camp Colt, has written a song for the "treat 'em rough" boys, the words of which follow:

The Yanks and their tanks will go through the Boche's ranks And roll right to Berlin. They are ready to fight any time, day or night.

And when the battle's thickest they'll go in. But when our captains give the command, "Come on! Treat 'em rough!" gee, I think it's grand.

Then the Yanks and their tanks will go through the Boche's ranks And roll right to Berlin. This same sergeant, when asked why the boys happened to be called "Black Toms," and why that particular animal was chosen as the tank symbol, offered this explanation:

"You see," he said, "the tank and the toment resemble each other in disposition. The big black toment is a nice, clumsy animal when you treat him right. Just pet him and rub his back and you will find him hand and foot. He will rub his nose against your leg and purr happily, climb up into your lap, cuddle close to you and go to sleep, because you are his friend."

Back to the Arms of Peace

"That, of course, is when you treat him right."

"The tank is quite the same. It is a great friend of mankind. Take away the steel armor and you have a simple tractor. Attach ploughs and other implements for tilling the soil and you have one of the best friends the farmer has known."

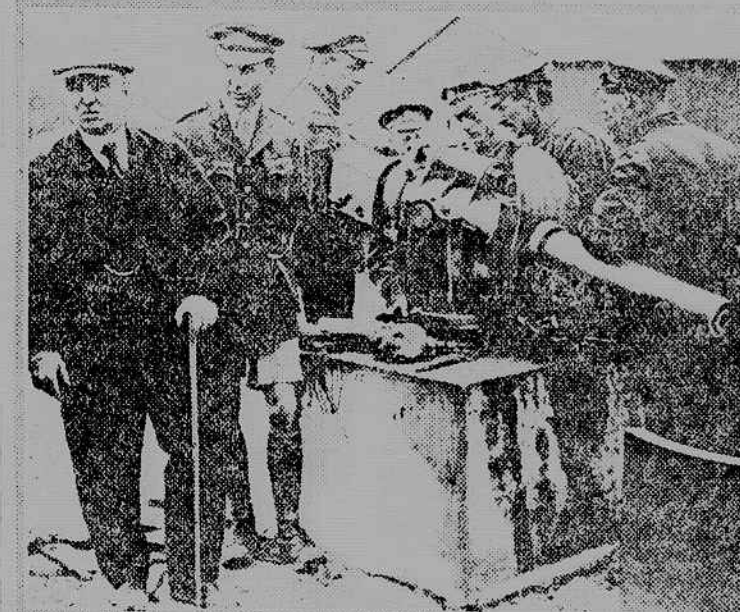
"You will agree that both toment and tractor are peaceful."

"Take that same peaceful toment and beat him or kick him, and you will have a growling, clawing, spitting, snarling thing with his fighting clothes."

"That same peaceful tractor responds to the call of Mars in much the same way. Called on to do its armor and defend the country that gave it birth, the tank becomes the most fearful of our engines of war. It charges into the Huns without thought of consequences to itself, tearing down enemy defenses, scattering machine gun nests, tearing up his barbed wire entanglements and spreading demoralization in the ranks of those it opposes. And as the really peace-loving toment is turned into a thing of fury, the caterpillar tank in action embodies the very spirit of modern war. Its capacity for destruction is without limit. Its remarkable effectiveness in offensive tactics has come into first hand notice."

"This toment, Hun-crushing force, is calling for men to drive and man it. It needs men with nerve and the kind of guts of which Kipling sang. Climb aboard if you feel you have them. If you are yellow, stay at home."

THE GUNS THE TANKS CARRY



The first picture that has reached this country of the "heavy gun" the tanks carry—an adaptation of the three-inch field gun.

perhaps, the most dangerous job of all, for these men must creep out under cover of the night, and crawling over the embattled field strewn with the debris of the day's fight, recover from demolished tanks whatever parts are fit for further use. They are exposed to enemy snipers and the danger of enemy discovery. If some tank, abandoned by its crew because of enemy shelling, has by chance escaped enemy capture and lain quiet but practically uninjured throughout the fighting, these men worm their way to it, make any necessary repairs and return with it, often under heavy fire.

The motorcycle corps, an important part of the tank service, rushes about during battle carrying dispatches, officers and men from one point to another, under a constant barrage of ex-

from delay in receiving government help. That is, the league would, through its local secretary, render financial aid or assistance as far as it could.

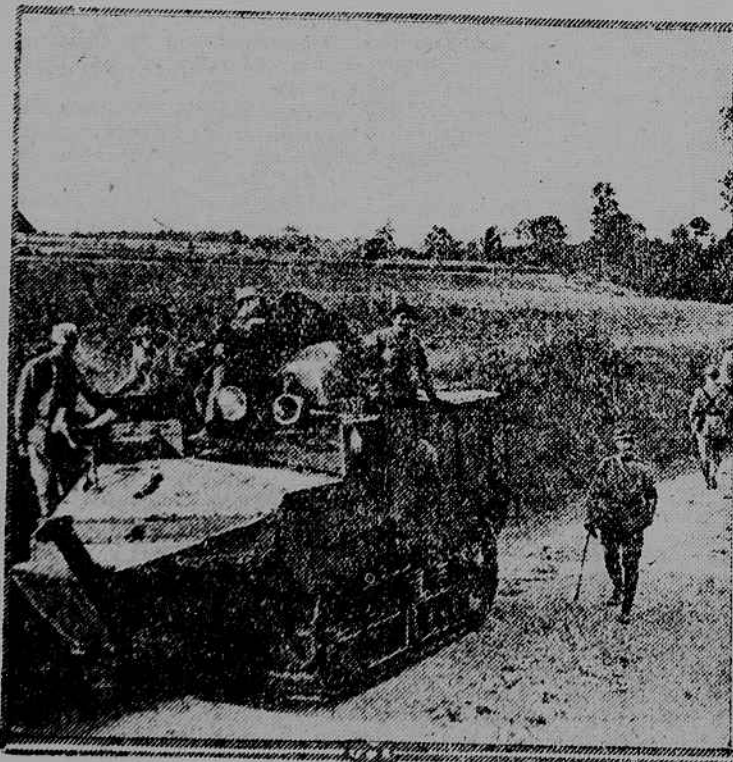
They Allow

Civilians to Help

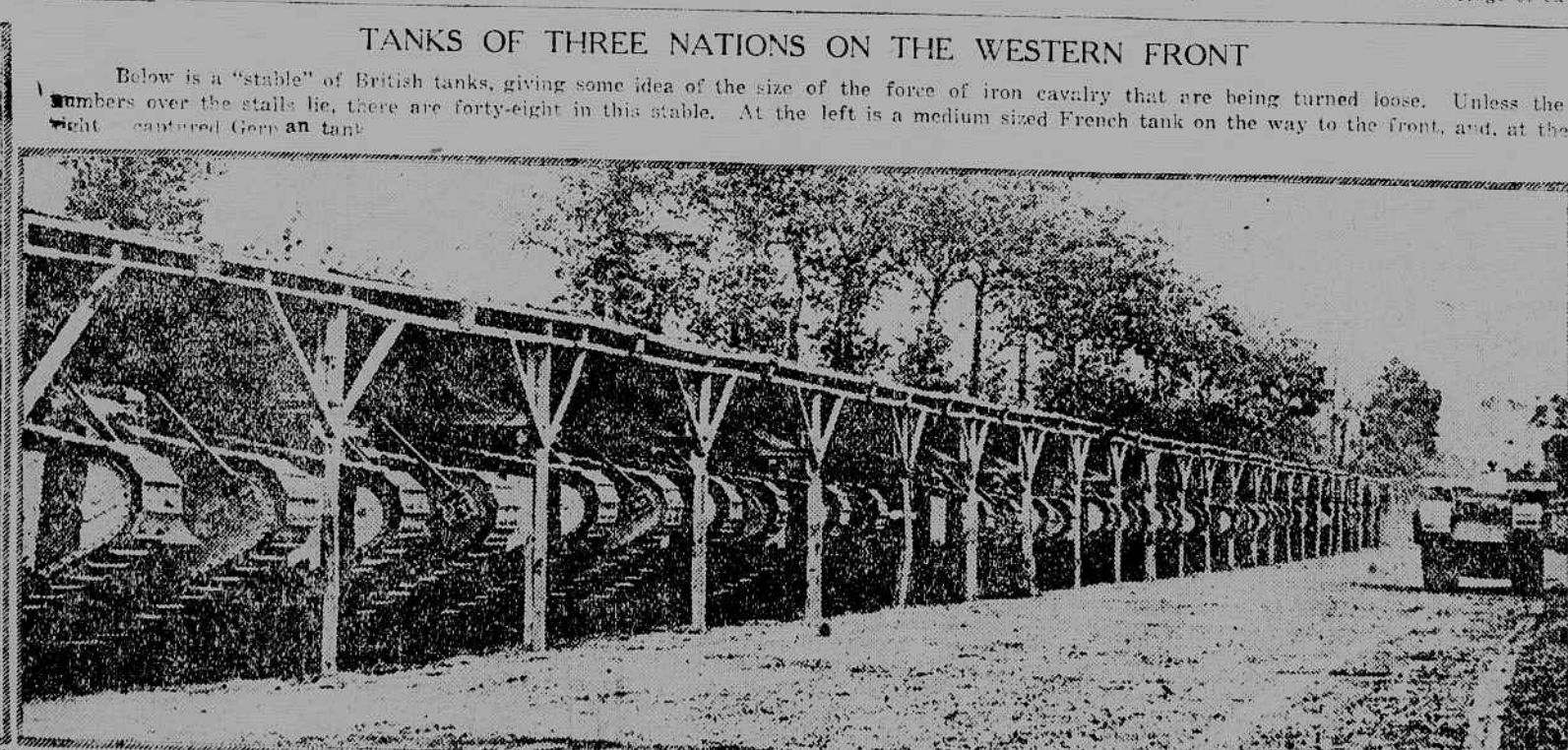
The organization has two classes of membership—(1) officers and enlisted men and (2) civilians. The enlisted men pay a fee of 50 cents and the officers \$1. Any civilian is eligible upon payment of \$1, and receives a jolly little button besides the comfortable feeling that he is helping one of the most important branches of the service and doing his bit toward crushing the Hun. And on that day when our "Black Toms" roll into Berlin and lay the offending Boche out like one of mother's gingerbread men the man or

TANKS OF THREE NATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

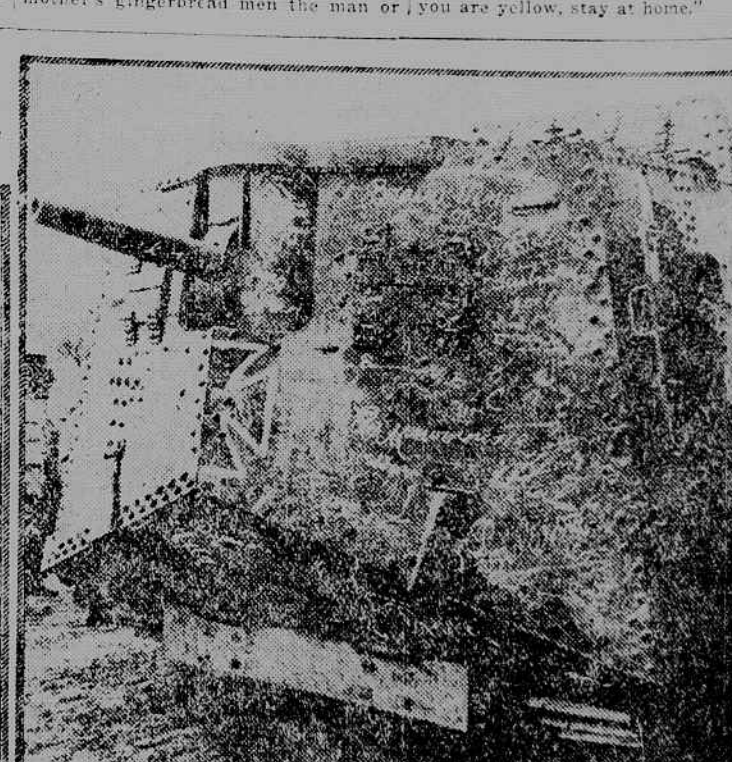
Below is a "stable" of British tanks, giving some idea of the size of the force of iron cavalry that are being turned loose. Unless the numbers over the stalls lie, there are forty-eight in this stable. At the left is a medium sized French tank on the way to the front, and, at the right, captured German tank.



French pictorial service.



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French pictorial service.